

## **I. Executive Summary**

### **a. Project Title: Reduction of Synthetic Pesticides and Fertilizers In Five California Counties—The BIOS/ LFN Strategy.**

**Applicant Name: Community Alliance with Family Farmers**

### **b. Project Description and Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives**

Chemical-based agriculture has been justifiably cited as one of the primary contributors to the decline of aquatic species and habitats in California. As the state's leading organization advocating for sustainable agriculture, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) seeks to eliminate the need for these chemicals, particularly organophosphates, by promoting an agriculture that works in harmony with natural processes and encourages the creation of habitat for a rich diversity of species.

CAFF operates two programs in five counties in the San Joaquin and Sacramento River watersheds that directly motivate farmers to reduce their use of synthetic chemicals and adopt biological farming practices. The Biologically Integrated Orchard Systems (BIOS) program provides technical information to farmers interested in dramatically reducing or eliminating pesticide use. At the same time, our Lighthouse Farm Network (LFN) provides a forum for farmers to share experiences so they can confidently proceed in the elimination of toxic chemicals. It is time to widen our sphere of influence to include many more farmers. We ask CALFED to fund the continued expansion of our technical assistance programs, BIOS and LFN, in our five target counties.

### **c. Approach, Tasks and Schedules**

CAFF will continue the collaborative, peer involvement approach that has been successful for BIOS and LFN since their inception in 1993. The tasks outlined in this proposal, however, will emphasize a conversion focus in both programs. We are prepared to move out of the demonstration and technique development phase and into a phase of facilitating a widespread conversion to biological farming strategies. Directly linking BIOS and LFN through the five tasks outlined in our proposal will involve intensive use of media to reach the broadest number of farmers and agriculture professionals in our target counties and in the larger agricultural community. We propose a three-year program focused on almond growers but also reaching conventional growers of other crops through LFN and our media campaign.

### **d. Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED**

CALFED has made a \$660,000 investment in the BIOS approach to farm management. This investment has allowed CAFF to establish conclusively that BIOS methodologies for pesticide elimination actually work. But the next step, widespread acceptance and application of biological techniques, must still be taken. CAFF's work will lead to the massive reduction in aquatic habitat stressors from agricultural sources.

### **e. Budget Costs and Third Party Impacts**

We are asking CALFED for a total of \$1,681,056 over three years: \$472,425 in year 1, \$803,181 in year 2, and \$405,450 in year 3. Reduction or elimination of the targeted chemicals will result in enhanced habitat for a large variety of aquatic species. In addition, the general quality of the physical environment for people will be enhanced because of the greater diversity of species, the elimination of dangerous chemicals from surface and ground water and cleaner air.

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#### **f. Applicant Qualifications**

With funding from a variety of leading public and private environmental organizations, including CALFED, CAFF has been operating a variety of farmer-support programs for the last twenty years. In recent years, CAFF has been recognized for our environmental work through BIOS and LFN. Our staff and volunteers have been participants in some of the major alternative farming initiatives in the state of California. With over 30 professionals on staff, CAFF has consistently led the farming community in promoting and adopting sustainable practices, and we enjoy excellent working relationships with institutions such as United States Department of Agriculture, University of California Cooperative Extension, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and many others.

#### **g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation**

CAFF will engage the California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) to monitor reductions in pesticide use in the subject counties. The State of California will provide the pesticide use reporting data base for the counties, and readings will be taken at the beginning, during and at the end of the project time period. Grower surveys and other media-based research techniques will also be used to document pest reduction.

#### **h. Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives**

CAFF has spent the last four years winning the confidence and support of local farmers, farm organizations (including the Farm Bureau), local community leaders and elected officials, and a wide variety of state agency personnel in the target counties. Many of these people have participated in LFN meetings as speakers and in a variety of BIOS farm tours and events. The success of BIOS and similar programs have resulted in a reassessment of the assumptions of chemical agriculture. Support of this program will promote CALFED's ecological restoration objectives and the regeneration of our precious water and habitat resources.